

Community Relations

SUBJECT: Therapy Dogs

The District supports the use of a therapy dog program for the academic, social and emotional benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this policy.

Therapy Dog.

A “therapy dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Owner to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to District students. Therapy dogs are not “service animals” as that term is used in the American with Disabilities Act. The dog must be well behaved and have a temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school. Therapy dogs are the personal property of the dog owner and are not owned by the District.

Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures.

Therapy dogs in the school setting will be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Education. Prior to recommendation and approval, owners will satisfy the following requirements:

- a) Request: An Owner who wants to bring a therapy dog to school must submit a written request form to a principal or superintendent. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy dog will be used.
- b) Training and Certification: The Owner must submit the American Kennel Club’s Canine Good Citizen Certification or its equivalent as determined by the Superintendent. The certification must remain current at all times.
- c) Health and Vaccination: The therapy dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, house broken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs. The Owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy dog’s current vaccinations and immunizations and health from a licensed veterinarian.
- d) Control: A therapy dog must be under the control of the teacher or school employee through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would

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interfere with the therapy dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the therapy dog must be under the owner's control at all times.

- e) **Identification:** The therapy dog must have appropriate identification identifying it as a therapy dog.
- f) **No Disruption:** The therapy dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior.
- g) **Health and Safety:** The therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.
- h) **Supervision and Care of Therapy dogs:** The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. The District is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy dog.
- i) **Authorized Area(s):** The Owner will only allow the therapy dog to be in areas in school buildings or on school property that are authorized by District administrators.
- j) **Insurance:** The Owner must submit to the Business Office a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on school property.

The building principal must notify parents and guardians on an annual basis regarding the presence of therapy dogs in the school building and school grounds.

Exclusion or Removal from School

A therapy dog may be excluded from school property and buildings if an administrator determines that:

- a) A handler does not have control of the therapy dog;
- b) The therapy dog is not housebroken;
- c) The therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or

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d) The animal's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.

The Owner will be required to remove the therapy dog from school premises immediately upon such a determination.

Allergic Reactions

If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a therapy dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator.

Damages to School Property and Injuries

The Owner of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the therapy dog.

Therapy Dog in Training

This policy will also be applicable to therapy dogs in training that are accompanied by a bona fide trainer.

Adopted: